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ABSTRACT

Home economics professionals were surveyed to determine the communication competencies necessary for the completion of their tasks. The most highly rated of the 13 competencies listed by the subjects were the abilities to converse in professional situations, to use other oral processes (argument, complaint, opinion, persuasion, questioning), and to speak in public. The same list of competencies was then presented to 13 teacher educators who rated them for their importance to teachers. After considering the items alone and in groups of two and of four, the teacher educators rated the abilities to listen and to evaluate most highly. In addition, they rated other verbal skills--such as the oral processes of questioning, debate, and persuasion; conversation; and presentation strategies--as important. (Author/FL)

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FORECASTING COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES OF TEACHERS

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Forecasting Communication Competencies of Teachers

My purposes today are to report to you a study in which home economics graduates who worked with families in educational situations were consulted as to the communication competencies necessary for their tasks. The list of competencies will be distributed to you on a sense sheet. Following the report, I will ask you to rate the list of competencies as to their importance in training teachers. You may add other competencies. Then, I will ask you to discuss your opinions with other persons in the room, re-rating your list after each discussion. Finally, I will ask you to tear the sense sheet apart, leaving the white copy for me, taking the yellow copy for your file.Later, I will send you an abstract showing the results of our discussion today.

The study of home economics communication competencies featured the Delphi method to assess the competencies and to obtain consensus. This data was one source of information to determine objectives for courses in communication in a college of home economics.

Support for a study of competencies, especially for communication was provided by Dennis (1978) who stated that we face oblivion as a race unless we examine our great power to communicate, a skill we do not use to optimum advantage.Kennicott and Schuelke (1972) suggested that educators identify the communication skills required for different careers and develop courses to teach these skills. Among the writers who recommended that teacher training programs require the identification of role relevant competencies, because of declining enrollments

inadequate funding, and accountability were Irwin (1980), Khasnavis (1977), and Mosley, Cohen, and Almanza (1978).

The purpose for studies of competency related to program planning, certification standards, and professional improvement (AHEA 1974). Wieman (1978, 1977) indicated a need to relate theory to everyday life and to provide greater literacy through a concern for goals and outcomes.

Definitions of competence and competncy were collected from Bunda and Sanders (1970), Block (1978), Spady (1978), Nardine (1977), Argyris (1965), and White (1959). In this study, these definitions were integrated to provide the definition: a competency is an attitude, behavior, knowledge, skill, or understanding used to deal creatively and constructively with the environment one perceives.

In this study communication was defined as the process of sending and receiving messages. The message involved the senses of sight, sound, and touch. Communication media were defined as the systems which convey messages through reproducible and selfcontained programs.Key words for communication were organized as follows: audio, oral, or verbal; non-verbal; organizational; visual; and written.

Consensus in communication is the basis of the Delphi method. Weatherman and Swenson (1974) pointed out that the first round of a Delphi study is a needs assessment. The Delphi method developed from operations research of World War Two. Olaf Helmer (1966) used the opinions of international experts to predict changes needed for the survival of man; permitting the experts to revise their

predictions in three iterations. The Delphi method has been used to determine the values of society (Baier and Rescher 1969), the future of professions (Lee 1973), to evaluate cost-benefits of educational programs (Judd 1972), as a pedagogical tool (Young 1974, Weaver 1972), to determine needs (Cyphert and Gant 1970), and to determine competencies of the following educators: home economics (Young 1980), nutritionists (Sims 1979), adult educators (Rossman and Bunning 1978), inservice teacher education (McLendon 1978), teachers of the deaf (Piccolino 1978), industrial arts teachers (Copeland 1977), automotive instructors (Oyler 1977), teacher educators (Buff 1976), outdoor educators (Nadeau 1976), educators of the deaf (Prickett 1976), music teachers (Raimon 1975).

Some communication competencies were researched in studies using other methods, considering all the competencies of teachers. Asher et al (1981) recommended that parent educators have training in non-verbal response. Home Economics Teacher Educators (1978) included active listening, giving feedback, questionning, identifying the most important person with whom to communicate, speaking with clarity at the listeners level, negotiating, resolving conflict, and evaluating communication. Brogden (1978) searched for competencies for middle school teachers and included management of groups, counseling, identifying resources and using AV equipment. Parsons (1977) surveyed the needs for classroom humor after reading Popham. Poulton (1977) included the ability to establish rapport with the community. Brehman (1976) examined the instructional process of special education teachers and

concluded that it was important that teachers use communication to gain and maintain attention, to encourage student participation, and to check student progress. The Home Economics Teacher Educators of Pennsylvania (1976) added the need to use perception in communication and to use clothing to communicate personality. Vallely (1975) stated that teachers need to understand film and other media and to find, evaluate, and develop new material.Roberts and Becker (1973) concentrated on the verbal and non-verbal communication of teachers, noting that the best teachers were dynamic, having superior delivery skills and the ability to reinforce with banter.

Procedures For Home Economist Panel

Random selection was made from 200 home economics graduates between 1962 and 1972. The response rate was 51%. 55.5%, and 46.5% in the three rounds.

The Round One questionnaire included items about the communication skills used when dealing with professional peers, clients, and the public, as well as the training recalled.Content analysis of the answers was used to develop a 22 item list of communication competencies.Subjects were asked to rate the items using a five point Likert scale and to suggest additional items. Round Two data were analyzed using Spearman Rho to determine the mean, median, and interquartile range. A visual and statistical report was included with the Round Three questionnaire which comprised 33 items.Subjects were asked to join consensus or give reasons for not so doing.Factor analysis with varimax rotation reduced the data to 13 competencies (Kim and Mueller 1978).These

competencies were rank ordered according to mean.

Discussion of Findings, Home Economics Panel

The list of 13 communication competencies recommended for home economists constitutes the item list of Table 1.The ability to converse topped the list.

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insert Table 1 about here

Other oral processes, such as argument, complaint, opinion, persuasion, and questionning should be understood.

The ability to speak in public ranked third.

The fourth ranking competency was a complex factor, identified as presentation strategies. Simple, practical presentations , demonstrations, and teaching strategies should be organized, practised, and evaluated.

The next competency, another complex factor, was labelled evaluation and listening. Items loaded in this factor included the ability to discipline oneself and others in one's environment.

The opportunity to experience organizational communication such as committee work, making reports, and understanding barriers to communication should be included.

Technology as it applies to both the profession and the home should be understood and applied.

Most writing competencies loaded in the next complex factor. The preparation of policy briefs and documents to sell, creative writing which links the theorist and the consumer, technical research writing, reporting counseling situations, and the

preparation of graphics and illustrations were all included in this complex factor.

Next was another complex factor related to the use of media. It included planning and producing displays which involve lettering, design, and layout. Media should be used for public relations. Broadcasting on radio and television should be experienced with the help of media specialists.

Business writing, such as letters, manuals, and job descriptions should be included at both the design and interpretation levels. The use of the telephone should be included.

Prerequisites for communication classes loaded in two complex factors. The first was described as content, and included drama and the fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, and a knowledge of the resources of the profession.

The other factor was identified as prerequisite processes. These might be a part of the learning experiences of the class. How to promote and persuade should be included in public relations activities. A consideration of the choices and consequences involved in decision making is important for home economists. Management of people is another related process.

Finally, the ability to write, to speak, and to understand a second language was listed.

Procedures For Teacher Educators

Teacher educators present at the Association of Teacher Educators 17 February 1981 in Dallas, Texas, who attended the session on Forecasting Communication Competencies of Teachers were handed a pressure sensitive sheet which included the list of 13

competencies derived for home economics educators. They were given 5 minutes to rate the items from 1 to 13 and to add any communication competencies for teachers. This work was done alone. Then they formed dyads to discuss the competencies. At the end of 5 minutes they were asked to rerate the items. Then groups of four were formed for further discussion. At the end of 10 minutes each person rerated the items. Each of the three ratings were analyzed for mean, variance and standard deviation.

Discussion of Findings for Teacher Educators

Demographic Information

The demographic questions asked were related to the subjects and level taught, the age group of the participants, the highest degree attained, and sex.

The sample was small and this may bias the results. There were 13 persons at the session. Of these 5 (38.5%) taught grades K to 3 and 5 (38.5%) taught undergraduate education students. In total 10 (76.9%) taught in elementary or secondary systems and 7 (53.8%) taught at the university level. Those who worked with education students reported the school level in which they supervised.

One persons (7.7%) was a school psychologist, 1 (7.7%) was a school principal, 1 (7.7%) taught English and 1 (7.7%) taught science. Eight (61.5%) reported working in teacher education supervising field experiences for student teachers.

The ages ranged from 30 to 60, with 6 (46.2%) in the 31 to 40 year age group and 3 (23.1%) in each of the two older decades.

The doctoral degree was achieved by 4 (30.8%).The majority

held a master's degree, 7 (53.85). Two (15.4%) had a batchelor degree.

The majority in attendance were females, 9 (69.2%). The number of males was 4 (30.7%).

Items Added

Several additional communication competencies were added by particpants. However, none of these were included in the rating. In a future study with a larger sample, these items could be added: interpersonal skills, the ability to individualize instruction, the ability to plan, non-verbal skills, the use of a humanistic approach, and humor.

Differences Between Teacher Educators and Home Economists

The opinions of teacher educators differed from those of home economists. If a comparison is made of the order of items in Table 1, which represents the thinking of home economists with the one person column of Table 1 one finds agreement on positions 1, 2, 4, and 13. All other items are given different ratings. A comparison of the four person column for teacher educators with the order of items for home economists in Table 1, there is agreement on position 2 only. Teacher educators and home economists agree that oral processes rate second in importance.

Difference Between Rounds for Teacher Educators

Comparison of the one person, two person, and four person columns shows that the teacher educators were influenced by discussion with each other. The items which remained constant across the three ratings were organizational processes which rated fifth, content prerequisites which rated sixth, public

speaking which rated tenth and business writing which placed eleventh.

A comparison of the one person column and the four person column of Table 1 which represents individual thinking compared with the final effects of discussion shows that oral processes rated second and the use of media rated eigth, which indicates only a little consistency.

Conclusions of Teacher Educators

The items have been reordered in Table 1 to show the final thinking of teacher educators.

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insert Table 2 about here

It was concluded that teacher educators give priority to the communication competencies of evaluating and listening. Next were verbal skills: oral processes such as questionning, debating and persuading; conversation; and presentation strategies for providing necessary information. Least important communication competencies included the ability to speak a second language, to apply technology while communicating in the classroom, and to have training in business writing. It is not to be assumed that these latter communication competencies are unimportant.Comments indicated that all communication competencies are important for a teacher.

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Table 1: Rating of communication competencies by teacher educators

competency	one person	two persons	four persons
converse	1	1	3
oral processes	2	3	2
public speaking	10	10	10
presentation strategies	4	4	3
evaluate, listen	3	2	1
organizational processes	5	5	5
apply technology	12	12	12
written	9	7	7
use media	8	9	8
business writing	11	11	11
content prerequisites	6	6	6
process prerequisites	7	8	9
second language	13	13	12

Table 2: Communication competencies for teachers

competency	mean
listen, evaluate	2.66
oral processes	2.88
converse	3.44
presentation strategies	3.44
organizational processes	4.11
content prerequisites	6.22
written	6.44
use media	7.33
process prerequisites	7.44
public speaking	8.33
business writing	9.44
apply technology	9.66
second language	9.66
*interpersonal skills	
*individualize instruction	
*planning	
*non-verbal	
*humanistic approach	
*humor	

* suggested communication competencies, not included in the rating